

**REMARKS**

This Amendment, submitted in reply to the Office Action dated December 9, 2009 and the Advisory Action dated March 25, 2010, is believed to be fully responsive to each point of rejection raised therein. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration on the merits is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-6 and 9-17 are all the claims pending in the application.

**I. Rejection of claims 1-6 and 9-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103**

Claims 1-6 and 9-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being unpatentable over Machida et al. (Patent No.: US 6,885,387 B1), hereinafter “Machida” in view of Allan et al (EP 1094635 A2), hereinafter “Allan.”

As discussed above, Applicant has amended claim 1 to recite “a plurality of elements, which are components of the network equipments of the communication network, associated with hierarchical levels.”

Applicant submits that the art cited by the Examiner does not teach this aspect of the claim. Specifically, the PC’s, printer, image scanner, and FAX modem (elements 402a-g, which the Examiner cites for teaching the claimed plurality of elements) are not components of the network equipments of the communication network.

Therefore, claim 1 and its dependent claims should be deemed allowable.

Further, to the extent that claim 9 recites features similar to those discussed above, Applicant also submits that claim 9 is patentable for analogous reasons. Further, Applicant also

submits that all claims dependant upon claims 1 and 9 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

## **II. Conclusion**

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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